

THE MONDAY MEMO

Written from Harare, Zimbabwe By Dr. John Stanko Issue 206

Greetings once again from Zimbabwe! I'm writing this after finishing a long day by speaking at tonight's session of the Action Conference here in Harare. Everything in me wants to go dig up an old **Monday Memo** and send it to you, but I sense that I am supposed to write something new. So that's what I'll do, although it may be short and sweet.

Last week we began another purpose profile, this time focusing on Daniel. We saw last week how Daniel had values and principles that guided his life's decisions. Even though he had been through a hellish relocation to Babylon, Daniel decided that he would stay faithful to His God and maintain the dietary laws of the old covenant. I promise you that, if I was relocated, forced to attend a foreign school, made to learn a new language and culture, given a new name and made a eunuch, my diet would be the last thing that would concern me. But Daniel, though young, knew what was important to him and he was determined to live out those priorities. I urged you last week to write out your values and then find ways to act them out in your everyday life.

YOUR JOY AND YOUR CROSS

I made a statement tonight when I was speaking and I would like to repeat it here: **Your purpose is your joy; the fulfillment of your purpose is often your cross.** Daniel's purpose, in my opinion, was to interpret and explain mysteries, riddles and dreams: "To these four young men God gave knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning. And Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds" (Daniel 1:17). That was easy for Daniel to do. Your purpose is always something that comes naturally to you, something that is your second nature. I can create order out of chaos. It's my joy and I could do it all day and all night, then do it again the next day.

So my joy is creating order, but my cross is where I've been called to create that order. I've stated on many occasions that church work isn't my first choice as a place to work. I've often asked God if He could send me to ABC, CBS, IBM, NCR or any other company where there is chaos for me to order. But God's choice has been church work for me. I embrace that work, but it's not what I would choose.

Do you think Daniel would have chosen Babylon as the place where he would express his ability to interpret mysteries? I doubt it. But God sent him there and Daniel distinguished himself as a civil servant to heathen kings and also as a prophet to the people of God from Babylon. Daniel's joy was interpreting mysteries, but his cross was Babylon.

GOD CARES ABOUT BEAUTY PAGEANTS.

You may be resisting or struggling with your purpose not because of what it is but where or how you will fulfill it! You may love to fix broken things, but God may want you to fix broken things in a place or for people you don't like. You may establish firm foundations, but you don't care to establish them for businesses whose mission isn't something that seems important or meaningful. On one occasion a few years ago, a beauty pageant enlisted my consulting services. I brought order out of chaos there and they honored me

for helping them. I remember thinking, “I didn’t think God cared about beauty pageants, but I guess He does, because He sent me there to work and serve.” You may have a call to ministry, but you want to minister in your home country. God on the other hand, wants you to minister in a place far from home, so you aren’t ministering. Can you see that your problem isn’t your purpose, but the fulfillment of it?

I urge you to learn from Daniel’s example and embrace your purpose **and** its fulfillment. Once you clarify your purpose, then go one step further and clarify where your purpose is needed and go there. It may be across the street or around the world; it may be to people who look like you or not like you at all. But if you are to be a person of purpose, you must not only know your purpose, but where your purpose is most needed and wanted. Both your purpose and its fulfillment are in God’s hands. I hope that this week you will trust Him for both. Have a great week!

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I greet you once again from the continent of Africa, specifically from the nation of Zimbabwe. I just finished participating in the annual Action Conference sponsored by Hear the Word Ministries, and it was a grand conference indeed. My wife left for home last Saturday and I will be here until June 9. It was great having Kathryn here and I miss her now that she is gone. It may be harder to bring her and send her home than not to bring her at all! But I am grateful that she was able to see the conditions here in Zimbabwe, including the great things the Lord is doing among His people here.

By the way, if you’ve tried to access www.purposequest.com in the last week, you found that it is offline. As soon as I can get the problem worked out, we will be back up and running. In the meantime, I apologize for the inconvenience.

The last two weeks we have been conducting a purpose profile on Daniel. The first week we saw that Daniel was a man of values and I urged you to do some work developing and clarifying your own values. Last week, we discussed the fact that purpose is your joy but the fulfillment of your purpose may be your cross. Daniel’s purpose was to interpret mysteries and dispense wisdom, but the fulfillment of his purpose took place in Babylon, a culture he would not have chosen to live in as a good, kosher Jew. I pointed out that your hesitation with your purpose may not be what it is, but how or where God wants you to fulfill it.

MAKING MENTAL NOTES

This week, I want to point out one more thing that made Daniel’s purpose so enduring, and that was his practice of writing things down. We read: “In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream, and visions passed through his mind as he was lying on his bed. He wrote down the substance of his dream” (Daniel 7:1). Someone once said that the problem with taking mental notes is that the ink fades so quickly! Many people on their PurposeQuest try to record their journey in their head instead of writing it down. I’ve found that keeping some kind of purpose journal or record is not only helpful, but essential if you are to be a person of purpose. What’s more, I’m

finding that the record of your PurposeQuest can often serve as a guide to others who are yet to come and walk their own purpose path.

If you read the book of Daniel, it reads like a personal journal. It isn't all in chronological order, and it records Daniel's feelings and insights. In fact, I can identify seven things that Daniel wrote about in his journal.

1. He wrote about history from his perspective, including his role in it.
2. Daniel included other writers (see Daniel 4).
3. He recorded his spiritual insight, dreams, interpretations and questions.
4. Daniel recorded his physical condition and personal thoughts.
5. He wrote down what God thought about him! (see Daniel 9:23)
6. Daniel wrote down his prayers (see Daniel 9).
7. He left a written legacy for others to follow, which is why Jesus referred to him as a prophet and not just a government official (see Matthew 24:15).

LEAVING A PAPER TRAIL

Daniel was a man of purpose. One of the things that makes him relevant today is that he wrote things down. Are you ready to do the same? Do you have journal? Do you spend any time at all writing? Are you leaving a paper trail that allows someone to follow and understand your PurposeQuest? Are you leaving a paper trail to help you, if no one else, see your purpose progress? Here are some helpful tips that may help you as you write:

1. You don't have to write every day. Set aside an hour or two every week that is devoted to writing.
2. Keep your journal with you wherever you go. An electronic handheld computer may be easier to carry around than a paper notebook.
3. Do you have a personal website? They are easy to develop and give people access to your entries. Regular entries can leave you enough material for a book in a short time.
4. Have you ever heard of the practice called "blogging?" Blog is short for "web log" and it is a way for you and others to record thoughts and carry on discussions in cyberspace. There are several books and a lot of material online that can more fully explain blogging to you.
5. Take steps to write a book. I have an article entitled "How to Write a Book" at <http://www.purposequest.com/misc.htm>. Until my website is back up and running, write me and I will send you the article.

Perhaps you could even do a regular update similar to this **Monday Memo**. The 207 issues of the **Memo** provide a legacy that records my own understanding of purpose in general and my own purpose in particular. However you choose to do it, I urge you to begin or to continue a written record of your life and purpose. Using Daniel as a model, I pray that you will realize the importance of writing and pursue it this week with a sense passion and vigor. Have a great week!

THE MONDAY MEMO

Written from Harare, Zimbabwe By Dr. John Stanko Issue 208

I have some good news and some bad news this week. The good news is that my website is back up and running. The other good news is that I return to the States this week, having been in Africa since April 20. The bad news is that I have to leave Africa. The time has gone by quickly and my time has been so enjoyable and purposeful. I want to especially thank all my friends and family here in Zimbabwe for a great visit. I'll be back in Kenya in July and Zimbabwe in August, Lord willing, so our separation won't be for too long. But I am still sad to leave, but joyful to be going home.

This past week I had the chance to spend three days cruising Lake Kariba on a houseboat. What a great time I had with 13 other men! And I learned three important lessons: 1) Make sure you have enough fuel in your speedboat before you go exploring; 2) Don't assume that the water you are drinking is pure and bottled or else you will pay a price; and 3) God wants us to deal with hard hearts so we can have bread smarts. I won't explain the first two (you can figure them out for yourself), but I do want to make some comments about lesson three.

HARD HEARTS . . .

At Lake Kariba, we were able to view plenty of wild game on the shoreline, especially elephants and hippos. You haven't lived until you sit on the deck of a houseboat, watching an African sunset, while hippos graze and bellow all around you. One day while we were watching a herd of 20 elephants graze, drink and frolic by the Lake, I was overwhelmed by God's abundance. There was plenty of water, fresh air and food for all His creation in and at the Lake. Hippos and elephants are among God's largest creatures and they require tremendous amounts of food every day (and it is amazing that they reach that size as vegetarians). None of them seemed anxious, however, nor did any of them feel the need to store something for tomorrow. My mind went to the story found in Mark 8, immediately following the time when Jesus had fed thousands with seven loaves and a few small fish:

The disciples had forgotten to bring bread, except for one loaf they had with them in the boat. "Be careful," Jesus warned them. "Watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and that of Herod." They discussed this with one another and said, "It is because we have no bread." Aware of their discussion, Jesus asked them: "Why are you talking about having no bread? Do you still not see or understand? Are your hearts hardened? Do you have eyes but fail to see, and ears but fail to hear? And don't you remember? When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up?" "Twelve," they replied. "And when I broke the seven loaves for the four thousand, how many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up?" They answered, "Seven." He said to them, "Do you still not understand?" (Mark 8:14-21).

Jesus had just performed a fabulous miracle reinforcing what I learned at Lake Kariba: God has the ability to provide abundantly for His creation. Yet the disciples got into the boat and misunderstood what Jesus was saying because they didn't understand the principle of abundance. They had seen Jesus feed a multitude on two occasions using

just a small amount of food, yet they were still focused on their own needs. They couldn't comprehend the lesson Jesus was trying to teach because their hearts were hardened. Even though they had ample evidence of God's ability to provide, they were still fretting that they had only one loaf between them.

... BREAD SMARTS

This lesson has implications for us as we pursue our purpose. Is it possible that you can't clarify your purpose because you are concerned about bread? Is it possible that God is speaking to you, but you are coming to the wrong conclusion because you are worried about how He will provide for you while you fulfill your purpose? Since we launched PurposeQuest in 2000, God has provided for my wife and me in miraculous ways, often in the very hour of our need. Yet that hasn't stopped me from fretting and often misunderstanding what God wanted me to do because I was overly concerned about whether His abundance would show up when I needed it. I almost missed going to Afghanistan in 2003 because I was focusing on bread while God was speaking to me about purpose. As I've talked to many people about purpose, they immediately turned the discussion to finances. Yet all of them had many of their own testimonies of God's provision over the years. Jesus identified this inability to trust God in spite of ample evidence to the contrary as hardness of heart. Is your heart hard or soft where the issue of God's abundance and provision for you, your family, business or ministry is concerned?

As you seek your purpose or seek to fulfill it, may I leave you with three lessons that are part of what I call "bread smarts." They are:

- 1) **God will take care of you.** If He provides for the hippos, birds, crocodiles and elephants, He can do the same for you.
- 2) **God won't provide what you need before you need it.** God doesn't have to do this because He is so confident in His ability to provide for you. You need to share in His confidence.
- 3) **God often speaks in symbolic and figurative language.** Jesus spoke in parables and God often speaks to you in ways that require you to listen carefully to determine what He is saying. A preoccupation with your own needs may cause you to come to the wrong conclusion about what He is saying. This may cause you to ignore or misunderstand your purpose.

This week you may need to deal with a hard heart or pick up some bread smarts. Whichever it is, both will help you as you pursue your PurposeQuest. I pray the truth of God's abundance will touch you this week, spurring you to greater heights and depths as a person of purpose. Have a great week!

THE MONDAY MEMO

From the desk of Dr. John Stanko Issue 209

This week's **Memo** is brought to you from my home office. It's great to be back home after eight weeks on the road. I have two weeks at home before I am off for more adventures on the road. I

have so many things to accomplish over the next two weeks that I am determined to utilize all my time management skills. This is what I want to talk about this week.

SO MUCH TO DO, SO LITTLE TIME

Even though I have many things to do in the next two weeks, I want to maintain my writing schedule, which includes a new book, editing and writing two additional books for others, two magazine articles, and two writing projects that I want to post to my website. How can I do this and still take care of my daily responsibilities of running a business? If God doesn't help me, there is no way I can do all this. But I have a role to play in this and that role is to plan and prioritize my time. I have a to-do list for this week that starts on my desk and runs out my front door! When I have this much to do, I must keep written lists and prioritize them. I must then stick to my priorities, no matter how many interruptions may come.

Most people tell me that they don't have enough time to write, create, study, learn or develop new skills that will enable them to advance and grow. But the truth is, you have all the time there is in the world—24 hours every day. What you really mean is that you don't have large chunks of time to do what you must do. Julia Cameron had this to say about time and productivity in her book, *The Sound of Paper: Starting from Scratch*:

Most of us think, "If only I had more time, then I would work." We have a fantasy that there is such a thing as good creative time, an idyll of endless, seamless time unfolding invitingly for us to frolic in creatively. No such bolts of limitless time exist for most of us. Our days are chopped into segments, and if we are to be creative, we must learn to use the limited time that we have.

When ego is siphoned off creativity, when creativity becomes one more thing we do, like the laundry, then it takes far less time to do it. Much of our desire for creative time has to do with our trying to coax ourselves into being in the right mood to create. We want to "feel like it," and when we don't or don't quickly, we think the solution is more time. Actually, the solution is less attention to the vagaries of mood. In short, creativity needs to become daily, doable, and nonnegotiable, something as quotidian [everyday, commonplace, ordinary] as breathing. When we make a special occasion out of our art, we rob ourselves of the time we actually have.

Often I don't start doing something because I don't think I have enough time to complete it. When that is the case, I need more faith that God will help me use the time I have. At other times, I don't start something because I am afraid I don't have enough time to do it *well*. And then there are times that I have so much to do, I don't know where to begin—so I don't even try. When that happens, I need more courage, not more time. Why aren't you doing more? Are you afraid you don't have enough time to finish it or afraid you don't have enough time to do it well? Or do you have much to do, but can't seem to prioritize what is most important and stick to that no matter how many other voices clamor for your attention?

TALK ISN'T CHEAP – IT'S EXPENSIVE.

You've heard it said that talk is cheap. I think that the opposite is true—talk is expensive. When you only *talk* about what you're going to do and not to it, it costs you dearly. It costs you in lost opportunities. You lose confidence and self-esteem when you can't finish what you want to do. You lose the money that you could receive from seeing your ideas become reality. You may be

praying for provision. Instead of money, God gives you an idea. Not turning that idea into cash costs you something.

I begin every morning by writing that day's installment for my weekly Bible study. Every day I use 20-30 minutes to create something that I want to do and that God has placed on my heart to do. I have promised 5,000 people that they will get a study every week. I discipline myself to sit down and write. I don't even edit what I write, and thirty minutes a day prove to be a blessing to many people around the world. Writing is a priority for me and I do my best to stick to that priority no matter what comes along. Make a list of things you would like to do this week and then put them in order of importance. Then do your best to follow those priorities for seven days and see what happens.

But what about those things you said you would one day? Are you prepared to stop talking about what you will do one day and embrace the fact that *this* is the day that the Lord has made? What aren't you doing because you don't think you have enough time? I want you to think of one thing you have said you will do and spend 20 minutes (less than 2% of your day) doing it every day this week. It may be exercise, learning a new language, writing in your journal or answering your emails. Just 20 minutes a day will add up to 140 minutes this week, which is more than two hours. If you do that every day this month, that will add up to more than nine hours! Stop waiting for large chunks of time that will *never* come. Instead, seize the moments you *do* have and watch them add up over time. You will then find yourself not only talking about what you will do, but actually doing it! Have a great week.

THE MONDAY MEMO

From the desk of Dr. John Stanko Issue 210

I wish a belated happy Father's Day to all the fathers reading the **Memo** this week. I just got back from Washington DC where I visited my wife's father and I also got to spend some time with my daughter. Now I'm back in Pittsburgh and I have a busy week ahead as I prepare for my first of two cruises to Alaska this summer. This first one is a working cruise for another ministry and the one in July is for PurposeQuest. By the way, there is one bed remaining for the PurposeQuest Alaskan cruise July 30. If you're interested, please write and let me know.

Last week we discussed the topic of time management. I'm glad to report that I had a good, productive week. This is how I did it. Last Monday I wrote one master task list of everything I wanted and needed to do for the coming week. I didn't discriminate between big and small things, urgent and non-urgent. Then every day I studied that master list and composed a daily list of things I needed and wanted to do. I then stuck to the list, even when I was interrupted or encountered unexpected delays. I'm going to do the same thing this week, because I have only four days before I leave for Alaska on Friday. It is critical that I maximize my productivity every day this week.

MOTHER STANKO

My mother will be 89 this September and is in pretty good health. She called me the other day and asked for a favor, wanting me to take her to have lunch with a 93-year-old friend of the family this coming Thursday. Of course, I said that I would. I don't have the

time, but I'll be gone for three weeks and it's always important to me that I spend time with my mother while I'm home. So even though I have a lot of things to do, I am going to trust the Lord, have faith for time and take my mother to see her friend.

We're learning to have faith for money, business and ministry, but it's important that we also learn to have faith for time. In the Old Testament, Joshua had much to do as he pursued and battled Israel's enemies. The only way he was going to finish was to have faith for more time. His faith caused him to pray an unusual prayer: "On the day the LORD gave the Amorites over to Israel, Joshua said to the LORD in the presence of Israel: 'O sun, stand still over Gibeon, O moon, over the Valley of Aijalon.' So the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, till the nation avenged itself on its enemies, as it is written in the Book of Jashar. The sun stopped in the middle of the sky and delayed going down about a full day. There has never been a day like it before or since, a day when the LORD listened to a man. Surely the LORD was fighting for Israel!" (Joshua 10:12-14).

Joshua asked for the sun and moon to alter their normal courses and God answered his prayer! Joshua got creative and prayed a prayer of faith. God answered Joshua's prayer and gave him enough daylight to finish the job he had before him.

A MIRACLE IN TIME

This is an unusual, even bizarre story, but I believe it embodies an important principle where time is concerned: God can help you have the time you need to finish what you need to finish. Armed with that knowledge, can you then believe God for the time you need? This is critical, because often we put off important things because we don't believe we have enough time to fit them in or do them well. This week, I am determined to have faith for time, to finish all the critical things that are before me. I'm not going to fret and I'm going to keep my priorities in order. That means I will pray, read, write and, of course, take Mother Stanko to see her friend. Because you believe God can give you time, you can exercise, study or do the other things that you've previously said you didn't have time to do.

When you say, "I don't have enough time," you are making a statement of unfaith. The truth is, you have all the time there is—24 hours a day. But God is still able to take limited resources and make them adequate, and he can do the same for those 24 hours. So why not believe God for a time miracle this week? And how will you walk out this miracle? By doing what I'm going to do on Thursday when I take my mother to see her friend. You will express your faith for time by doing something that is important for you to do, whether you think you have time to do it or not. I invite you to join me this week as together we have faith for a miracle in time. Have a great week!