

May 28, 2018
By Robert J. Tamasy

A PURPOSEFUL CONSIDERATION

Why are you here? Have you ever asked yourself that? This is a fundamental question many people wrestle with at one time or another. For some, it comprises the ultimate question of life. But even if your intent is not deeply philosophical, it can be helpful to consider. Many businesses use mission statements as guides, expressing not only what they do but also why and how they do it. In a similar way, taking time to articulate one's purpose – or mission – can be useful for ensuring your time, energy and talents are being invested in the best possible ways.

An industrious friend, Steve, who has built a very successful career as an entrepreneur, has spent considerable time seeking to respond to the “why am I here” question for his life, both personally and professionally. In addition to an extensive statement of purpose, Steve has articulated his core values, vision for his life, and his “primary aim.” This he defines as, “I want to know God and make him known.” He has devoted much of his life – at work, in his home, and engaged in ministries like CBMC – to pursuing that goal.

Years ago I was in a meeting where a speaker suggested writing a personal purpose or mission statement. Kind of a “where am I going, how am I going to get there, and how will I know when I have arrived?” expression. For many of us in the room, this was a revolutionary concept. How can I put into writing what I perceive my life's purpose to be? Does my life even have a specific purpose?

I was not as ambitious and detailed as my friend Steve, but happened to be reading a paraphrased wording of *Philippians 3:10*, which says, “[For my

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determined purpose is] that I may know Him (Jesus Christ) – that I may progressively become more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him, perceiving and recognizing and understanding [the wonders of His Person] more strongly and more clearly” (Amplified translation). As soon as I read this, I knew it communicated what I believed my life should be about as effectively as anything I could write.

Several years before I had adopted another passage, *Proverbs 3:5-6*, as my life verse: *“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.”* And later I came across Psalm 45:1, which sounded like a good career verse: “My heart is overflowing with a good theme; I recite my composition concerning the King; my tongue is the pen of a ready writer.” Combined, these passages express for me the focus I have desired to give my life, along with my sense of mission for using the gifts, abilities and experience God has given to me.

Author and philosopher Henry David Thoreau wrote, “The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation.” Many years later, this observation still seems fitting. Perhaps one reason is because most people have not taken the time, hit the “pause button” on their lives for a little while, to consider their overall purpose, their mission, one that is greater than earning a living, building enterprises, or seeking to “have fun” through a variety of diversions. Are you among them?

I like the admonition from *Psalm 90:12*, *“Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.”* When we learn to “number our days,” it helps us in putting them to good, intentional use.

© 2018. Robert J. Tamasy has written *Business at Its Best: Timeless Wisdom from Proverbs for Today's Workplace; Tufting Legacies*; coauthored with David A. Stoddard, *The Heart of Mentoring*, and edited numerous other books, including *Advancing Through Adversity* by Mike Landry. Bob's website is www.bobtamasy-readywriterink.com, and his biweekly blog is: www.bobtamasy.blogspot.com.

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Reflection/Discussion Question

1. Does your company or organization have a written, clearly expressed mission or purpose statement? What is the value – if any – of such an expression, in your view, for the company and its leaders, staff or team members?
2. If someone were to ask you, how would you define your purpose, your answer to the question, “Why am I here?”
3. Do you know of anyone else who has taken the time to write a personalized purpose statement? If so, what does that mean for them in their everyday life and work? Do you believe they are actively, consciously striving to hold true to that purpose?
4. Would you agree to the idea that God has a purpose for everyone? Why or why not?

NOTE:

If you have a Bible and would like to read more about this subject, consider the following passages:

Psalm 118:24, 139:1-6,13-16; 2 Corinthians 5:19-21; Ephesians 2:8-10

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