

WHAT IS YOUR REFERENCE POINT?

By Jim Langley

The North Star, the brightest star in the constellation Ursa Minor, is the star most visible to the naked eye. It has been used for centuries to show travelers on land and sea astronomical true north for navigating whatever path they choose for a journey. It works for everyone: If we use the North Star as a reference point by night, we can easily remain on course as we travel. In a similar manner, a compass can help in staying on course during the daytime. This might be new information to some, because these days we typically utilize electronic navigational devices for determining the shortest and fastest distance from Point A to Point B.

We would be wise to start with a reference point in all aspects of life. Virtually everything we do in our personal and business lives draws upon a reference point. It serves as the basis for how we conduct our daily affairs. It helps us determine what direction we choose for the many life decisions we make. But how do we select our reference point? Basically, is it worldly or eternal? Whether we realize it or not, we all address life from a secular or a spiritual platform. So let me ask: *What is your reference point?*

For directions in our everyday life journey, we cannot rely on any electronic device to show the way. We need a moral compass we can trust implicitly. For me, for many years that moral compass has been the Bible, the inerrant Word of God. I have found answers to all of life's questions within the 66 books contained in its Old and New Testaments. I go to God's Word daily, since it helps me navigate my personal journey.

Earlier in my life, I trusted in my own judgment, based on what I saw going on around me. I watched the world and did my best to follow others whom I considered successful in their fields of expertise. But when I received Christ as my Savior and Lord, I realized trusting in the patterns and values of this world would be unprofitable in most aspects of life. Since then, my journey has been filled with joy and peace. Things I once strived for have become far less important. My focus now is close relationships and pleasing God in all I do.

In 1988, Harvey B. MacKay published his classic sales management treatise, *Swim With the Sharks Without Being Eaten Alive*. This book, updated in 2005, remains a valuable resource to small and large businesses alike, for succeeding in one's chosen business endeavor. For the most part, the useful principles he presents are not new; many of them can be found in the Bible. Frankly, I would much rather go directly to the book of Proverbs for advice in how to live my business and personal life. Since it has 31 chapters, there is a chapter set aside for each day of the month!

I prefer reading the words of King Solomon, the author of Proverbs, who is considered the wisest man in history. He uttered more than 3,000 proverbs, according to historical accounts. In Proverbs 1 alone, we find 33 verses presenting valuable truths that can certainly benefit all who read them. In verse 7 we are told, "*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of all knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline.*" There are no shortcuts to gaining wisdom. God's Word needs to be applied one day at a time. As we read it, we discover that success is not what really matters, that the people around us are as important as we are.

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I suggest that God's Word and His Holy Spirit be your reference point, your "North Star" for maximizing your life here on earth. Do not be fooled by the world's reference point, which only leads to eventual destruction. We need an eternal perspective for all we do – and for all we can become in Jesus Christ!

© 2020, all rights reserved. Jim Langley has been writing for more than 30 years while working as a life and health insurance agent. In recent years, his passion has turned to writing about his relationship with God. His goal is to encourage others to draw near to Him as well. A long-time member of CBMC, he started writing "Fourth Quarter Strategies" in 2014.

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Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. Can you locate the North Star on a clear, cloudless night? Have you – or someone you know – ever used it as a reference point for travel? How is it helpful?
2. Have you noticed that over the years, what is considered right and what is considered wrong in every area of life – including the business and professional world – seems to change? Why do you think that is? Do you think the idea of having a single, consistent reference point for how we live our lives, both professionally and personally, is realistic? Why or why not?
3. What do you think of the idea that we should use the Bible as the reference point for how we approach our lives, including our work? How does this apply to you personally?
4. Who do you know that does use the Scriptures, the Word of God, as their "North Star" for how they approach every area of life? What about them, if anything, stands out to you?

NOTE: For more about what the Bible says, consider the following passages:

[Psalms 25:1-5; Proverbs 2:1-5; Ecclesiastes 12:11-14; 1 Corinthians 1:27-31; James 1:5-8](#)

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