

FOCUS YOUR LIFE

Confucius say, “Life really simple, but we insist on making it complicated.” (Or was that Charlie Chan?)

We make matters complicated when we utter things like, “Will you marry me?” and “Don’t worry; we can afford this Maserati because the kids’ll all get scholarships” and “Lighten up, neighbor; I only took a few limbs off your madrona to improve my view.”

E.F. Schumacker said, “Any intelligent fool can make things bigger, more complex, more violent. It takes a touch of genius - and a lot of courage - to move in the opposite direction.”

Einstein believed “Everything should be made as simple as possible, but not simpler.”

Elbert Hubbard explains how to get down to basics: “The sculptor produces the beautiful statue by chipping away such parts of the marble block as are not needed - it is a process of elimination.”

DaVinci put it artistically: “Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication.”

And D.H. Mondfleur seemed to know we needed this set-up line for Hang Time: “Eliminate physical clutter. More importantly, eliminate spiritual clutter.”

If you’ve ever felt out of focus, you’re about to get acquainted with a powerful clutter-busting, fog-cutting tool that can, in about 10 minutes, focus your entire life!

Recently I spent a day in Orlando with Bobb Biehl, one of America’s master strategic planners. He’s been working with leaders and organizations for 30 years, helping them clarify and simplify their personal lives and businesses. He gave us many tools to do that. We’ll test-drive one of his high octane ones now. It’s called

“FOCUSING YOUR LIFE”

Each of us hits patches of fog when our direction seems ill-defined. When this happens, Biehl says it’s time to take the “50,000 foot view” of life, and find your North Star because we all need to know which way is North – a way of seeing how we fit in the world, a gauge of what’s really worthwhile, a picture that makes sense of everything for you, a map for making critical choices. Each person’s map will be different, and will evolve as life advances.

So, here’s Biehl’s tool to help us get focused quickly for life’s home stretch by locating your personal North Star, using the 5 points of the North Star: God, Purpose, Dream, LifeWork and Legacy.

Since the broadest context in which we can place our life is between History (the past) and Eternity (the future), and since both emanate from the Creator, here's Question #1:

#1 Under "God," write the first word that comes to mind when I say "God?" And if you were to tell a stranger who you think God is, what would you say, in one sentence?

#2 Under "Purpose" write one sentence on why you think God put you on this earth?

#3 A "Dream" keeps you energized for life, fueling your spirit without much outside encouragement or stimulation. Express your Dream in one sentence by answering: What difference do you hope to make for God before you die?

#4 "LifeWork" is the activity that's worthy of the time, energy and money you have left in life. What's worthy of those resources for you? What will be your LifeWork?

#5 Under "Legacy" put what you want to leave behind after your time on earth is over.

These questions can quickly crystallize our scattered thoughts. **Now if you're comfortable, I'd love to hear your answers.**

Here are my answers, scribbled out at Biehl's seminar. They're certainly different than they would've been one, five or ten years ago. That's why Biehl recommends revisiting them monthly.

#1 When I heard the word "God," I thought ... "accepted." To describe Him, I might say, "God is your Creator and Redeemer. He made you, forgave you of your sins because of His Son Jesus' death for you on the cross, and He wants to be with you always."

#2 Re Purpose, I believe God put me on earth to believe in, trust and enjoy Him one-on-one and with as many others as possible.

#3 My Dream? Before I die I want to have reflected God's love and acceptance to my wife Liz, to my family and to others in such a way that He'll be attractive and irresistible to them.

#4 I believe my LifeWork is to help others define their calling in life (including God's call), define their dream, and help them live it.

#5 I hope my Legacy will be that my family and others will know that nothing matters more than knowing, following and serving God.

Let's go to the Manufacturer's Handbook (*The Message paraphrase*) to get God's take on "Focusing Your Life."

James 4:13-17 James, Jesus' half-brother, writes: "And now I have a word for you who brashly announce, 'Today--at the latest, tomorrow--we're off to such and such a city for the year. We're going to start a business and make a lot of money.' You don't know the first thing about tomorrow. You're nothing but a wisp of fog, catching a brief bit of sun before disappearing. Instead, make it a habit to say, 'If the Master wills it and we're still alive, we'll do this or that.' As it is, you're full of your grandiose selves. All such vaunting self-importance is evil. In fact, if you know the right thing to do and don't do it, that, for you, is evil."

Matthew 16:24-26 Jesus said, "Anyone who intends to come with me has to let me lead. You're not in the driver's seat; I am. Don't run from suffering; embrace it. Follow me and I'll show you how. Self-help is no help at all. Self-sacrifice is the way, my way, to finding yourself, your true self. What kind of deal is it to get everything you want but lose yourself? What could you ever trade your soul for?"

Luke 6:46-49 Jesus said, "You don't get wormy apples off a healthy tree, nor good apples off a diseased tree. The health of the apple tells the health of the tree. You must begin with your own life-giving lives. It's who you are, not what you say and do, that counts. Your true being brims over into true words and deeds. Why are you so polite with me, always saying 'Yes, sir,' and 'That's right, sir,' but never doing a thing I tell you? These words I speak to you are not mere additions to your life, homeowner improvements to your standard of living. They're foundation words, words to build a life on. If you work the words into your life, you're like a smart carpenter who dug deep and laid the foundation of his house on bedrock. When the river burst its banks and crashed against the house, nothing could shake it; it was built to last. But if you just use my words in Bible studies and don't work them into your life, you're like a dumb carpenter who built a house but skipped the foundation. When the swollen river came crashing in, it collapsed like a house of cards. It was a total loss."

Proverbs 3:5-7 "Trust GOD from the bottom of your heart; don't try to figure out everything on your own. Listen for GOD's voice in everything you do, everywhere you go; He's the one who will keep you on track. Don't assume that you know it all. Run to GOD! Run from evil!"

His Deal

www.HisDeal.org

george@HisDeal.org

Copyright © 2022. George Toles. All Rights Reserved.