

there to care for us because that was their mission in life.

Their kindness and caring came from their belief in the Lord.

Most of them ended life with few things material to show for it. From their hearts, minds, and souls, however, their memories of their boys and girls flooded their later years with a satisfying glow.

We orphanage boys and girls found purpose in helping others, achieving more than ordinary success as productive citizens, filling many roles in American life. We know why we succeeded:

"There was a teacher."

"There was a matron."

This is the power of the Christian faith. You can read it for yourself, it's in the books. Christianity has influenced the lives of millions and the influence continues to grow as each person touched reaches out to others in love, generation after generation after generation.

How I Found My Mission in Life

I would be lying if I told you that finding your mission in life is always easy. It may be. It might not. It wasn't so easy for me.

When I left the orphanage I worked in an ice cream plant. The owner was willing to finance my education in dairy product manufacturing if I would work hard. But, I was incurably lazy. After a month I hit the road. What I loved was hitchhiking, knocking around from one place to another, on my own, living by my wits.

When fall came I knew that everyone else from my class was either enrolled in college or in the military. I signed up for college.

It was a disaster.

Within four months my laziness tripped me up. I flunked out. I went to the Navy recruiting station and signed up

Chapter XV Your Purpose in Life and Your Health

This is the true joy in life: to be used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one.

*George Bernard Shaw,
British author*

You might not have sensed the connection between finding your mission in life and your health. It is this. When your intention becomes specific and definite it is like an obsession. Your pace quickens, your awareness reaches out to embrace all those who come forward to help you. And your focus will become so intense that you will pay scant attention to the minor aches and pains everyone experiences.

You will choose health practices that will give you the energy and balance you need for the journey. Your soul will be keenly aware of your needs and will help with your choices.

In the orphanage where I grew up, our matrons, teachers, farm workers, administrators, and other workers were

as a hospital corpsman. In the back of my mind this deep desire to be a doctor had been bubbling for years. I just didn't know how I would do it.

In the Navy I soaked up biologic knowledge like a sponge. Obviously I had an able but undisciplined mind. A wonderful WAVE officer taught me valuable research techniques in the study of the tuberculosis germ. One day she asked, "How are you going to make your life count?"

I hadn't really thought about it. Make my life count? Suddenly my mind opened, the cloud lifted. I found purpose. I noticed everything. I buckled down. I absorbed. I learned what to do to go to college. By this time I was married to my orphanage sweetheart, even though I was only 19 years old.

Nothing could stop me. I would be a doctor. This time around I graduated with honors and went on to medical school on a full scholarship where I also graduated with honors.

Here's the beautiful thing. Whenever I needed an answer to a puzzling question or money or encouragement, the Lord brought that person into my life who could supply the need.

Here's the point. Finding purpose for your life is very health-giving, because poverty, drifting, and laziness are health-robbing.

In my case, my soul was poised, ready, the Lord sent the WAVE officer to stimulate my soul. Why did she do it?

Love.

Love of one person for another.

As a Christian I encourage you to spend whatever time it takes to find the purpose for your life. You will be able to teach other Christians how vital this is, leaving a legacy of love.

If you could ask my orphanage teachers for their magic formula, they would say:

"I loved those boys."

"I loved those girls."

The day will come when, after harnessing space, the winds, the tides and gravitation, we shall harness for God the energies of love. And on that day, for the second time in the history of the world, we shall have discovered fire.

—Tielhard de Chardin

Finding Your Mission in Life

Each of us has a purpose in life. Unfortunately, very few of us know what it is. Think about it. Do you know yours?

A personal mission statement is one way you can help yourself find your purpose in life. A personal mission statement is like a personal constitution.

Since we are creations of the creator, it is impossible to discuss your mission in life without getting into the subject of religion. This doesn't mean an "all-paths" approach to religion. An all paths approach is a no paths approach. A writer who mentions religion must write out of his or her own particular belief. This writer speaks from the Christian perspective since I write, think and breathe as a Christian.

In like manner your uniqueness includes your religious beliefs and an inventory of your uniqueness is crucial to finding your mission.

Why We Should Find a Sense of Mission

Ninety-four percent of Americans say they believe in God. 90% of Americans pray. 88% believe God loves them and 33% report a lifechanging religious experience. Religion is important to most Americans.

Our work, our relationships, our leisure; all these are important. What most of us want is some guidance to merge our religious beliefs with all aspects of life, rather than leaving each as a separate area that never talks to the other. We want our religion to talk to our work and our work to talk to our religion, for example, so that we will be uplifted by each.

After all, we are not just grains of sand on the beach of humanity, unnumbered and lost among the other 5 billion humans put here. Each of us is here for a unique reason, so that we may contribute to life in a fashion that no one else can match, making life richer for others, which thereby enriches us.

So, how does one begin searching for purpose?

A word of caution is in order here. Finding your mission in life is like going to town, there are many roads that can be taken. The process is what gets you to your destination, no matter which road you take.

Your search will require your heart, soul and mind. The entire person must unearth the wisdom of religious faith, and spiritual matters, for the question of mission inevitably leads to the Lord.

Barriers to Finding Your Mission

The idea of our work as a mission implies that we are called to it. A calling, then, suggests that someone has called and the destination has already been set. If the government didn't call or the military, the idea that life is a mission lands us squarely in the lap of the Lord.

You might be tempted to consider your work as something you choose because you love it. Here again we're thrown with God because enthusiasm is derived from the Greek "En Theos" which means "God Inspired."

The Secret of Finding Your Mission in Life

Finding your mission in life is not a quick process. It

takes time enough for you to go through the stages of learning. Each stage must be mastered before the next is attempted. Actually, you can look at it this way. You may say you have three missions in life or one mission with three stages.

Be aware. There is a sense that you never completely master any state of your mission. The journey is the thing. We are always growing toward understanding and mastery of each stage. This comes most easily if we can step to the rhythm, the flow. Each stage has a different rhythm. Here's something wonderful you'll find when you're in the search for your mission. Suddenly, you'll become acquainted with others who are likewise in the search. They appear in unlikely ways at opportune times to give you a hand.

The Three Stages of Mission

Stage #1. Seek to stand hour by hour in the conscious presence of the Lord, the giver of life and mission. Strive to know the Lord, to enjoy the Lord, and to see his hand in all your deliberations.

If we consider the Lord as "the one from whom we came and the one to whom we shall return," we need to re-establish contact by reaching out to the one who gives the mission. Otherwise the search will be fruitless.

The soul's origin is a mystery. But, if we presume that the soul is from the Lord and will return to the Lord, any talk of "having a relationship with the Lord" is superfluous: we are connected through the soul. The only choice we have is what to do with the time spent on earth and that choice will affect the nature of the relationship between us and the Lord after death, as Jesus said in Matthew 7:21.

Life is physical: eating, drinking, sleeping, holding someone, being held, acquiring things. That's one interpretation of life. The other is to reach beyond all this and

recall and recover the spiritual interpretation.

We often must wrestle with ourselves, our pride, our rebellion, but if we ask what our mission is, it is "learning to believe in the Lord." When we have found His hand and reclasped it, we are ready to move on.

Stage #2. Do what you can moment by moment, day by day, step by step to make this world a better place. Be open to the Lord's spirit to lead you and guide you.

Sometimes we seem lost in dense fog, in the valley, not on the mountaintop. Then, we hear the voice. "Trust me. I will lead you. Your mission is to take one step at a time."

Every "moment of decision" leads to two roads. One leads to less gratitude, less kindness, less forgiveness, less honesty, or less love. The other leads to more kindness, more gratitude, more forgiveness, more honesty and more love. Your mission is to choose the later, the spiritual road, every time. This includes the times when you are tempted to cut someone off on the freeway, you refuse to give time to someone who is hurting, or you punish your mate for causing you hurt.

It's a large order to imagine that earth might be more like heaven or that human life might be more like the Lord's. This large order is accomplished by faithful attention to the doing of our Creator's will in little things as well as in large. This is no mere training camp. The goal is real. "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done, on Earth, as it is in Heaven."

Stage #3. Exercise that talent which you were born to use. Do this in the places which the Lord has caused to appeal to you the most. Be aware of the Lord's joining you and your talent into a burning desire to tackle those purposes which the Lord most needs to have done in the world.

The Lord has actually written His will twice "in our

members." First, in the talents which He lodged there and secondly, in his guidance of our heart, as to which talent gives such joy that we lose all sense of time when we use it.

Jesus said, "When the Spirit of Truth comes, He will guide you into all truth." (John 16:12) Career Counselling can be of inestimable help at this point by pointing seekers to their unique mission by helping identify their greatest and most enjoyable talent. A major source for self-study is **What Color Is Your Parachute?** by Richard Nelson Bolles, a Christian author whose writings have inspired these notes.

Many different voices will offer you work. The problem is to find out which is the voice of the Lord rather than that of society or the super ego, or self-interest. A good rule of thumb is: The kind of work the Lord calls you to is the kind of work (a) that you need most to do, and (b) the world most needs to have done. This is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet.

Five Steps to the Rhythm of Purpose

Sometimes we are unfortunate and are taught by persons who have not yet defined their mission in the world. Some things, then, must be unlearned before we can find our mission.

Step #1. Unlearn the idea that you always have to be in motion. Solitude, meditation, and thinking have value as periods for planning. Being stands above doing.

Step #2. Unlearn the idea that everything about your mission must be personally performed by you. Great work is always done by sharing large tasks. We are sent to bring more gratitude, more kindness more forgiveness, and more love into the world. There is too great a need for any one of us alone to meet it.

Step #3. Unlearn the idea that our uniqueness will be swept away because we are doing what the Lord ordered. The Lord honors our imaginations, our creativity, and our freewill. He will bless our uniqueness when we open ourselves to his counsel and invite his contribution to our thought process.

Step #4. Unlearn the idea that you won't contribute unless your achievement is on a grand scale. The stone never knows what ripples it causes when it splashes the pond's surface. Neither we nor those who are watching us will always know what we have achieved in life. It may be that we will never know until we see Him face to face after life ends.

Step #5. Unlearn the idea that what we accomplish is our doing and ours alone. The Lord's spirit has power and discernment and working through our souls we are given a sense of responsibility which directs the choices we make. So, it's always "we," not "I."

Summary

Knowing your mission in life settles in your heart that you're here until the Lord chooses to think that you have accomplished your mission, or until He has a greater mission for you in another realm. You need to be a good, but not an anxious steward. When your mission becomes certain, you will know what you came here to do and that you need not worry about anything else.

If I Can Stop One Heart From Breaking

*If I can stop one heart from breaking,
I shall not live in vain;
If I can ease one life the aching, or cool one pain, or
help one fainting robin unto his nest again,
I shall not live in vain.*

Emily Dickenson

But, don't just take my word for it. Find out for yourself. Let today be the day of your new beginning. Then, you be the judge. After all, now that you have the secrets, share them with others.

The Beginning