

WHAT ARE YOUR ULTIMATE GOALS?

By Robert J. Tamasy

As business and professional people, what we do is governed at least in part by goals: Sales or productivity goals; daily goals; project goals; financial goals; career goals. You could probably add to the list. But have you ever thought in terms of life goals, the ultimate goal for your life?

Recently I viewed a brief video in which a pastor described a meeting with a businessman in his congregation. The businessman planned to leave the church because the pastor had offended him by something said in his sermon. The pastor asked about what had seemed so offensive.

The businessman recalled the pastor had commented it was unwise for someone to strive to make as much money as possible, then move to a popular retirement area and spend the rest of his life playing golf. The businessman was offended because that was what he intended to do – as soon as possible.

In response, the pastor suggested the businessman was trivializing his life, devoting the rest of his life to chasing a ball around a golf course instead of using his God-given gifts and experience to be an influence on people. He said, “When you give your life to Jesus Christ, He calls you to be an influencer – to use your power, abilities and talents to influence the world around you for good, making it a better place.”

Too often we spend our work hours eagerly awaiting the weekend. We spend our careers anxiously anticipating retirement so we can ‘finally do what I want to do.’ Have you ever considered that what you do at work, where you are currently doing it, is precisely what *God* wants you to do?

The entire Bible mentions retirement only once. In the Old Testament book of Numbers it says of the Levites, the ceremonial priests of Israel, “*at the age of fifty, they must retire from their regular service and work no longer. They may assist their brothers in performing their duties at the Tent of Meeting, but they themselves must not do the work*” (Numbers 8:25-26). God had a succession plan for the priests who performed the ritual sacrifices, but even then, the “retired” priests were to continue assisting those who had taken their place.

We all are unique, having different interests, skills, life experiences, and for followers of Jesus Christ, spiritual gifts that God intends for us to use for His divine purposes. As Colossians 3:23-24 states so clearly, “*Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.*”

There are times for rest and relaxation, as we have discussed in past editions of Monday Manna. But having a life goal of working only long enough to amass enough resources to be able to withdraw from the world and engage all our waking hours in activities of no eternal impact makes little sense.

In His so-called “Sermon on the Mount,” Jesus spoke of focusing on things that will last for eternity: “*Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal*” (Matthew 6:19-20). Golf, or whatever pastime we choose, may be enjoyable, but we are unlikely to find much treasure there that will last for eternity.

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Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. Can you identify with the businessman who is striving to earn as much money as possible so he can retreat to a nice retirement area and spend the rest of his life pursuing his favorite hobby? Explain your answer.
2. Do you believe the talents, skills, and abilities you have ultimately were given to you by God, meaning you are responsible for faithfully stewarding them for God's glory? Why or why not?
3. Assuming you do believe that what you bring to the workplace – including spiritual gifts and experience accumulated over years in the marketplace – ultimately have been entrusted to you by God, how should that affect your approach to your job every day?
4. Jesus spoke about "laying up treasures in heaven" rather than "treasures on earth." What do you think He meant? What do you think this looks like, practically speaking?

NOTE: If you have a Bible and would like to read more, consider the following passages: Matthew 25:14-30; Romans 12:11; 1 Corinthians 10:31; Ephesians 6:7; Colossians 3:17

Challenge for This Week

When you wake up each day and prepare to go to work, does the idea that "whatever you do, do your work as for the Lord" ever come to your mind? If so, how does this affect your attitude and approach to what you will be doing?

Try to find some time this week to discuss this with a close friend, trusted advisor, mentor, or accountability group to get their input into what this means in a practical sense. If you admit you have been like the businessman who intends to devote his retirement years to what might be considered 'trivial pursuits,' share with them your thoughts based on what you have read in this week's Monday Manna.